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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

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National Intelligence Officers

MEMORANDUM FOR: D/OGI

FROM: Maurice C. Ernst
NIO/Economics

SUBJECT: Implementation Plan for the Economic Challenge--
Interagency Initiatives

DCI Talking Points

1. CIA has just completed a review of its activities in the area of economic intelligence. Various recommendations on ways of improving our performance were made. Most of these can be handled internally, but a few involve other departments and agencies and I would like to discuss them with you.

2. Generally, the review found that we were doing better in a number of respects, including especially:

- o Producing interdisciplinary assessments; and
- o Responding to the specific needs of individual departments and staffs involved in international economic affairs.

3. But the review also revealed some continuing problems and concerns. Specifically:

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- o It is sometimes difficult to obtain guidance on future national (as distinct from departmental) foreign economic policy needs that could help focus both our intelligence production and collection.

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problems is that various collectors may be operating from different priorities.

5. Although we have close contacts with the policy departments, both informally and through membership in various committees, we have difficulty obtaining a coherent picture of policy needs three, six, nine, or twelve months into the future. Also, we are often tasked by different departments concerning various aspects of the same policy issue. Although this is to a large extent the result of the inevitable diversity of the economic policy process, we would be able to prepare better focused and more coherent assessments and to better sort out our collection priorities if a central interagency policy group would provide the necessary guidance.

6. I would like to explore the possibility of establishing such a group. There is a precedent--the Economic Advisory Board, which was chaired by Ken Dam when he was in the White House. Perhaps such a group could be established under the aegis of the SIG-IEP? The group's functions could include:

- o Identifying specific policy issues possibly requiring economic intelligence collection and production over the following months;
- o Sorting out the responsibilities of the various departments and agencies in providing this collection and production.

7. For such a group to be useful, representatives would have to be in a position to speak for their departments--that is, they must be at the Assistant Secretary or senior DAS level. I realize these are busy people and that to justify using their time, the results must be worthwhile. The more their own departmental interests are engaged in this process, the better the odds on a useful result.

8. I would like to know:

- o Whether you think this is a good idea;
- o If so, how best to proceed.


Maurice C. Ernst